

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5672

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FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, IS, US

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S RETURN FOR CONSULTATIONS

REF: STATE 303454

1. SUMMARY. MESSAGE CONVEYED TO KHADDAM FOR ASAD. BOTH OUT OF COUNTRY DECEMBER 28-31. KHADDAM STATES THERE NO NEW ELEMENTS IN SYRIAN POSITION SINCE ATHERTON'S VISIT. SYRIA HOPES FOR COOPERATION WITH US IN SC DEBATE, CONSIDERING THIS IN BOTH OUR INTERESTS AS WELL AS IN INTEREST ALL ARABS. THERE NO DRAFT SYRIAN OR ARAB RESOLUTION AS YET AND NONE ANTICIPATED UNTIL ABOUT JANUARY 7/8. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE BOTH ASAD AND KHADDAM WERE SCHEDULED TO LEAVE ON STATE VISIT TO TEHRAN MORNING 28 DECEMBER, NOT TO RETURN BEFORE LATE ON 31ST, I REQUESTED MEETING WITH FONMIN EVENING DECEMBER 27 TO ADVISE HIM OF MY RECALL FOR CONSULTATIONS. NOTED THAT DEPENDING ON AIR CONNECTIONS I WOULD BE LEAVING DAMASCUS JANUARY 2 OR 3 IN ORDER MEET WITH YOU JANUARY 5. SINCE SARG WOULD BE OBSERVING HOLIDAYS OF NEW YEAR AND MUSLIM NEW YEAR FROM JANUARY 1-4, I WANTED TO GIVE HIM THIS MUCH ADVANCE NOTICE OF MY OWN TRAVELS. PRESENTED TALKING POINTS A-D AND SAID I WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH EITHER PRESIDENT OR HIMSELF ON THEIR RETURN FROM IRAN TO HEAR ANY FURTHER VIEWS WHICH SARG WOULD WISH TO

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CONVEY TO YOU SO THEY COULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AT THE

NEXT STAGE OF OUR REVIEW.

3. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS YOUR MESSAGE WITH ASAD DECEMBER 28. HE DOUBTED, HOWEVER, THAT SYRIA WOULD HAVE ANYTHING NEW TO CONVEY TO YOU BEFORE I DEPARTED FOR WASHINGTON. ASAD HAD PUT ATHERTON FULLY INTO THE PICTURE ON SYRIAN THINKING ABOUT THE SC DEBATE. SC WILL DISCUSS THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND TAKE A RESOLUTION CONCERNING IT. SUCH RESOLUTION MUST CONTAIN ELEMENTS UNTOUCHED BY 242/338 BECAUSE THOSE RESES ARE SILENT ON THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR RIGHTS. AS ASAD HAD STATED, SC WILL NOT DISCUSS 242/338 BUT RATHER THE SITUATION IN THE REGION IN LIGHT OF ALL RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS AND THE UN CHARTER.

4. KHADDAM CONTINUED THAT SYRIA HAS BEEN EXPECTING NEW ELEMENTS IN THE US POSITION BUT "APPARENTLY THE US IS CLOSING THE DOORS." HE HOPED THAT WHEN DR. KISSINGER COMPLETES HIS STUDY OF ATHERTON'S REPORT HE WILL FIND WAY TO INTRODUCE NEW ELEMENTS INTO US POSITION THAT WOULD BRING IT "CLOSER TO JUSTICE AND RIGHT." SIMPLE REAFFIRMATION OF 242/338 WILL NOT BE THE SC'S CONCERN. SC MUST DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN THE REGION AND FIND A SOLUTION. "WE HOPE," HE EMPHASIZED, "FOR COOPERATION WITH THE US TO ARRIVE TOGETHER AT THE SC AT A JUST AND LOGICAL SOLUTION. SUCH COOPERATION IS IN THE INTERESTS OF SYRIA, OF ALL ARABS AS WELL AS IN INTERESTS OF THE US."

5. I REPLIED WE WERE, AS YOU HAD UNDERLINED IN THIS AND MANY EARLIER COMMUNICATIONS, CONCERNED THAT GENEVA FRAMEWORK NOT BE UNDERMINED. THIS WOULD BE AGAINST EVERYONE'S INTERESTS BECAUSE IT WOULD LEAD TO STALEMATE AND FORECLOSE FUTURE NEGOTIATING OPTIONS. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT AS FAR AS SYRIA IS CONCERNED 242/338 HAD SERVED PRINCIPALLY TO PUT OBSTACLES IN PATH OF PEACE. US MIGHT BELIEVE SINAI II HAD BEEN ACHIEVEMENT FOR PEACE; SYRIA BELIEVED JUST THE OPPOSITE. AS FAR AS DAMASCUS WAS CONCERNED, SINAI II WAS IN FACT THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO PEACE YET DEVISED.

6. KHADDAM STATED THAT LOOKING AHEAD TO SC PROCEEDINGS, IT WOULD NOT BE IN US INTEREST TO USE ITS VETO. "BUT IF YOU
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DECIDE TO DO SO, WE SHALL TRY TO ACQUIRE A STRONG RESOLUTION FOR THE RECORD." HE EMPHASIZED THAT SYRIA WANTS TO HELP US MOVE AHEAD ON PATH OF PEACE BY JOINTLY REACHING AGREEMENT ON APPROPRIATE RESOLUTION AS WE HAD COOPERATED ON RES 381. "IT IS NOT, HOWEVER, DESIRABLE THAT ARABS SHOULD SURRENDER TO US POLICY. THIS WOULD BE DAMAGING TO AMERICA'S FRIENDS IN THE AREA AND TO AMERICAN POLICY. ARABS MUST REALIZE A STEP FORWARD IN THE SC." KHADDAM SAID THAT SYRIA

WAS NOW ENGAGED IN DISCUSSING ITS BASIC IDEAS ABOUT NEW YORK WITH OTHER ARAB STATES. WHEN THESE IDEAS HAVE CRYSTALLIZED, THEY WILL BE PUT DOWN IN A DRAFT RESOLUTION. THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN DONE AND WILL PROBABLY NOT BE DONE UNTIL JANUARY 7/8. HE ADDED, IN APPARENT HINT AT READINESS TO BE FLEXIBLE OVER WORDING OF PROSPECTIVE SC RESOLUTION, "OF COURSE, MATTERS ARE NOT JUST BLACK AND WHITE, THERE ARE MANY COLORS OF GREY IN ANY PICTURE."

7. I SAID THAT SYRIA SHOULD NOT HAVE UNDUE EXPECTATIONS ABOUT MY OWN TALKS IN WASHINGTON. ATHERTON'S TRIP AND NOW MY OWN RETURN HAD ON THE ONE HAND DEMONSTRATED US INTEREST IN FINDING COMMON GROUND WITH THE ARABS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT MOST DEEPLY CONCERNED US, WAS AVOIDING DAMAGE TO THE NEGOTIATING FRAMEWORK. HE AND PRESIDENT WOULD REALIZE THERE ARE LIMITS AT THIS POINT IN TIME ON WHAT CAN BE DONE WITHOUT INFLECTING SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THAT FRAMEWORK. WE AGREED TO BE IN TOUCH AGAIN DURING THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 31. KHADDAM SENDS YOU HIS BEST REGARDS.

8. SUGGEST THIS MESSAGE BE PASSED TO CAIRO.
MURPHY

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